

ENVIRONMENTAL PHOTOGRAPHY- "A NEW VISION OF SOCIETY"

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ABSTRACT

A picture captured can pique once interest and can intrigue what a photographer desire to illustrate in his/her work. And photography being a powerful medium of expression it delivers a message which photographer encodes in a picture. Taking a picture can be an easy task but making it useful and impactful is not so. A picture has a unique unseen power which can make a person think. Every picture has a story behind it, which a photographer creates. The story depicts a vision which has a power to alter the minds of viewers. An image can make people act in response and can even call for action by the viewers. Photography has become a great medium of communication and expression, which acts as a window towards reality.

KEYWORDS: *Environment, Photography, Pictures, Photographers*

INTRODUCTION

Environment photography portrays surroundings of one individual or a particular time period. This form of photography is not just related to nature, it is much more than that. It has been a topic of debate, about what should be included and what should not. Environmental photography is also related to humans and the environment in which they are living in. It is related to the emotions of a person who is being photographed along with their surroundings and their emotion becomes a core element of the picture. May it be the natural or manmade environment? It depicts the life of a person and conditions he/she is living in. It is a very powerful form of photography, even if there is no individual in a picture then also it can make people react or think about the environment or the society. It does not have a fixed area in which it can be bound.

Environment photography includes several aspect of our society for like poverty, evil practices, natural calamity, life of an individual, marine life and many more. It does not render the negative but also the positive side. It has a power to change the mindset of the viewer, make them think and at the same time it calls for an action by viewers, an organization, government or individual when ever and where ever is required. Environmental photography reveals the reality in the purest form and gives power to the subject

Environmental photography can be related to street photography as well as journalism but at the same time, they are bit different. It can be said that they are interrelated and have a different aspect of their own. There is just a thin line difference between the three forms of photography.



Figure 1

Picture captured: By Kritika Agarwal.

With the developments in taking pictures, we also find a change in the mindset of photographers. With the new and traditional techniques of photography, a different vision and a thought for change is also added in the work of photographers. Some photographers want to bring change to the society with their work and want the people aware about reality. From different fields of photography, some photographers came forward and started working on environmental photography like- Avani Rai, Rahul Ravi, Arash Yaghmaein, Saurav Anraj, Rajesh Jamal and many others, to bring changes in society. These photographers have a purpose for clicking a picture and want the viewers to think about certain issues. They use photography as a tool to advocate to the people about the threats or the conditions which are real, about which people need to think and certain action is needed to be taken.

Avani Rai, a name with which most of the photographers are familiar, is considered as a well known environmental photographer. Being daughter of great photographer Mr Raghu Rai, she followed in the footsteps of her father. But she has set her name in the field of photography, with her pictures and for her vision. She has not just made her father proud but also India. She became a role model for most of the female photographers of India. With her recent work on Kashmir, she highlighted the real beauty of the place as well as the real-life of people living in the valley. Series of pictures are titled as "Exhibit A" which depicts the story of true Kashmir and what all the people in valley go through in their daily life. Her pictures describe the environmental condition of the valley as well as the people. She says "My work is not to do with the politics of the Kashmir conflict, it is to do with the pain and suffering of a people whose voice has been taken away, torn long between borders and uncertain destinies" (Majumdar).

**Figure 2**

Picture captured: By AvaniRai, Place- Jammu and Kashmi

Saurav Anraj a Patna based photographer and the owner of Meowwala studio. The state of Bihar was affected by floods in 2019 but no proper action was taken by the Government. Here Saurav Anraj came forward and took photographs of floods in Bihar, with a different approach. He photographed a model on streets of Patna which were refilled with flood water, which grabbed the attention of the viewers and the Government as well. He thought that with a general picture of flood, no one will give a response and they will just comment and say 'so sad' and will move on. To seek attention and after observing the mindset of the onlookers he chose a model and made her pose in various flood affected areas. His picture was appreciated and also criticized nationally and internationally. His motive was to grab attention of the authority and the general public towards the situations not the model. The artist used satire to show that, to get the attention of the general public the content needs to feature a model not a common man. The pictures depicts actual condition of Bihar faced due to floods, where day to day life was affected, inadequately and no proper actions were taken in some regions of the state until this picture was published in media. When he posted his work, which went viral on internet and was all over media, and an immediate action was taken by the government and some of the non-profit organization came forward for the help of people living in Bihar.



Figure 3

Picture captured: By SauravAnraj, Place- Bihar

Aman Chotan a traveler photographer, documenting culture and life around the world He has been featured in National Geography India, Life Force Magazine, KLM Life magazine, India Today, Creative Image and received numerous awards for his work. The pictures he captured have a great poetic rhythm and a connection through which one can easily relate with his work. His pictures do not just portray the subject but also describe the environment around the subject. He has a peculiar vision and he relates to the subject so well that the viewer can experience a literal story behind the picture. He just does not study the subject but also gives equal importance to the environment of the subject which adds a cherry on the top to his work. He and his team started a project named "The Last Avatar". The project focus on the Indian tribes, whose existence they want to preserve, for the future generations of their community, as well as the other people who want to educate themselves about their cultural background. Their motto is to enrich the understanding of the various cultures manifested in different tribes that flourish in the remotest parts of the Indian subcontinent, and also to go a step further and help with an encouragement of the local trade that these tribes deserve (Chotani).



Figure 4

Picture captured: By Aman Chotani

Rajesh Kumar a passionate photographer who wants to capture the most common things people ignore in day to day life. He documents the usual things of daily life which go unnoticed. His work describes the existence of common people, which makes his work unique. One can relate to his pictures effortlessly as his subjects are relatable and one has seen those things happening around them, which creates a better understanding of life of a common person. Rajesh travels with his camera where ever he goes and mostly tries to be on the streets to find a new story. His picture "save water" shows a poor man is drinking water from the street pothole and gives a great message for saving water and that if we do not save water from now, the future condition of us all will be similar to the person. His picture depicts the environmental condition of poor and importance of water



Figure 5

Picture captured: By Rajesh Kumar, Place- Jaipur

These pictures acts as a window towards the environmental conditions in which one is living, it can be good as well as bad. In certain cases where the conditions are not favorable they demand for an action which needs to be taken. For instance a picture portraying the environment of a poor family or floods in city and life affected by it, these pictures demand for action. On the other hand, a picture of nature or the luxurious life of a millionaire will create a desire. But all the pictures show the environmental conditions and thus are part of environmental photography.

The environmental photographers highlight the conditions one is living in or it illustrates the nature of one's surrounding. It is not necessary that environmental photography is done only to highlight the problems. It shows the reality of the environment one is surrounded with. The pictures can be about different aspects of the environment like beauty of nature, the bustle of the city life, the lavish life of the ultra rich, the struggle of the poor and so on. We often mix this form of photography with the social photography or the nature photography but, Environmental photography works on a much broader spectrum. It touches various other forms of photography, but is unique in its own way.

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